

Kent County Report

Kent County, Local Communities Collaborate in National Competition

Kent County, Grand Rapids and a number of other local communities are in the running for millions in federal dollars to aid in protecting life and property, while promoting economic vitality through job creation, job protection, as well as boosting and protecting property values for low- to moderate-income families. This comprehensive, region-wide proposal came through our joint Kent County/Grand Rapids Emergency Manager; the idea is to place regions and communities in a position that they eliminate the need to call FEMA again. The proposal, called "**The Grand Strategy**," could do just that.

After Superstorm Sandy, Congress appropriated \$1 billion as part of a national program to create resilient communities – to help them bounce back quicker from unpredictable, natural events like tornadoes, floods, or drought. Municipalities along the Grand River qualified to participate in the competition through a submission by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, as a result of the 2013 Flood that caused significant damage in Kent County, Lowell, Ada, Cascade, Plainfield Township, the Cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Walker and Grandville.

"This is yet another collaborative effort of Kent County and the region - an inclusive effort," said Wayman Britt, Kent County Assistant County Administrator. "'The Grand Strategy' emphasizes restoring and working with nature to more effectively manage future flood events throughout the County and to protect vulnerable populations in both urban and suburban communities. This is not about sustaining the old; it is about improving the present and setting the stage for an exceptional future."

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April 22, 2013: Floodwater rose to just a foot from the base of the Blue Bridge in Grand Rapids.



Back-to-School Checklist

- ☒ Pencils
- ☒ Paper
- ☒ Shoes
- ☐ Immunizations

All children starting Kindergarten or 7th grade, or new students in any other grade, must show proof of vaccination!

Michigan's Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines at no charge to those who qualify (administration fees may apply).

Call today for details:
(616)632-7200
or find more information at
accesskent.com/immunizations



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
Caring today for a healthy tomorrow

National Competition, continued

Sixty-seven communities entered the competition; the Kent County region was one of 40 selected to advance to round two of the competition. Awards range from \$1 million to \$500 Million. “The City of Grand Rapids is very enthused by the quality of the partnership we’ve had in preparation of this Grand Strategy,” said Eric Delong, Grand Rapids Deputy City Manager. “Our ability to work this rapidly on such a major regional endeavor is because we all planned ahead together. The application so much reflects all of the work we’ve done, along with community planning efforts such as Green Grand Rapids and **GRForward**, to get ahead on resiliency, sustainability, and flood control mitigation. It’s amazing how all of that work accelerated this application. The quality of our planning is excellent and we are in a great position to create a resilient river city.”



April 26, 2013: Equalization Director Matt Woolford explains damage assessment process to a news crew.

The team leading “The Grand Strategy” grant proposal has identified about \$444 million in strong projects – existing projects that had been previously discussed and evaluated but were outside the current financial ability of the various jurisdictions to complete alone. With community partners identifying close to \$200 million in support, these projects to protect the communities may now be fiscally viable in today’s environment of tight budgets. Our proposal asks HUD for close to \$244 million.

“Implementing the Grand Strategy to restore the Grand River and build up our region’s resilience to extreme flooding will not only help stave off expensive and debilitating disaster,” said Andy Guy, Chief Outcomes Officer at Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. “The initiative will significantly improve West Michigan’s quality of life, leverage substantial private investment in community building, and catalyze the region’s next generation of growth and success. For these reasons the National Disaster Resilience Competition presents a timely and potentially game-changing opportunity for our region.”

Some projects include improvements to lift stations, better protection of clean water and waste water facilities, drain improvements, and improved river response for rescues or evacuations. “The Grand Strategy” team sent our regional strategy to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation this week and will work with MEDC on finalizing a HUD submittal in October. The decision on funding should occur in the first quarter of 2016.

State Adds *Pathways* Program in 10 Counties

The State of Michigan is expanding its *Pathways to Potential* Program, modeled after the Kent Schools Services Network (KSSN), into 10 more counties this 2015/2016 school year. The program was established to help children stay in school. This program is a key part of the Governor’s “River of Opportunity” plan to change the way government assists citizens in achieving success and self-sufficiency. The State’s model is not an exact duplicate of KSSN in terms of the full community school strategy. A KSSN site has a team of professionals, including a community schools coordinator, a case manager, an eligibility specialist, a nurse and a mental health clinician. In addition, there is also a broad network of support from nonprofits, the faith community, businesses and foundations. There are now 30 KSSN schools in eight Kent County districts plus the Kent Intermediate School District. Godwin Heights High School joins the network this fall. The district received a grant of approximately \$70,000 from the Steelcase Foundation for implementation of the program. There are now 32 counties in Michigan with Pathways schools.



Wanted: Dedicated, Civic-Minded Residents

The Kent County Board of Commissioners is seeking citizens interested in serving the community through appointment to various boards, commissions, and committees. Any Kent County resident may apply by completing an online application form via the County's website: www.accessKent.com/boardappointments. Resumes and cover letters are encouraged and may be attached. All residents are urged to apply. The application deadline is September 30, 2015. Questions may be directed to the Board of Commissioners Office at 616.632.7580.

Listed below are the boards, commissions, and committees that have resident openings for terms effective January 1, 2016 (unless otherwise noted):

- Agricultural Preservation Board
- Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan - Advisory Council
- Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan - Board of Directors
- City/County Building Authority
- Community Corrections Advisory Board
- Community Health Advisory Committee
- Community Mental Health Authority Board (*term begins April 1, 2016*)
- County Building Authority
- Friend of the Court Citizen's Advisory Committee
- Gerald R. Ford International Airport Board
- Housing Commission
- Jury Commission
- Kent County Family & Children's Coordinating Council
- Kent District Library Board (Region 2 and Region 6)
- Kent Hospital Finance Authority
- Lakeshore Regional Partners Substance Abuse Oversight Policy Board
- Millennium Park Architectural Advisory Review Board
- Officers' Compensation Commission
- Remonumentation Peer Review Group
- Veterans' Affairs Committee (*Applicant must be a Veteran of the Armed Forces.*)

Fiscal Services Awarded for Distinguished Presentation

Kent County has received the *Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the 2015 County Budget. The award reflects the commitment of the Board and staff to meeting the "highest principles of governmental budgeting." In order to receive the award, the County has to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation, including how well its budget serves as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device.



The County has earned the *Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* for 13 straight years, and 15 times in the last 18 years. The GFOA is a non-profit professional association with over 17,600 members in the United States and Canada. This is the only national awards program in governmental budgeting, and only about 1,200 entities receive it annually. "This award exemplifies the commitment of Kent County's elected officials and staff to be a statewide leader in financial management," said Fiscal Services Director Steve Duarte.

Help Wanted!

Do you want to work for more than a paycheck? We serve residents from birth records to immunizations, from public safety to property records, and much more.

Kent County has job openings for people who have the desire to serve the public and make our communities thrive!

Check out jobs that are open today, or create a profile to be notified when a job of interest becomes available.

Check out
accessKent.com/jobs

County Reviews Bids for 82 Ionia Building

Kent County received Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from three organizations for its building at 82 Ionia NW. The proposals were opened on August 28 by the Kent County Purchasing Division, and now they are being evaluated. The Kent County Board of Commissioners will make the final decision on whether to sell the property this fall.

Ferris State University and two real estate developers, Embassy Group Acquisitions, LLC and Franklin Partners, submitted proposals. The site is located in downtown Grand Rapids at the corner of Ionia and Fountain NW. Friend of the Court, Circuit Court Probation, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and Community Housing and

Development are housed in the building.

The County and Progressive A&E recently completed a 2015 Space Needs Study, the first done in more than a decade. The study looked at all of County-owned or leased property. Several buildings are not being used to their fullest potential, according to the research, including 82 Ionia, which is about 65% occupied.



Kent County Board of Commissioners & Administrator's Office

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Grand Rapids, MI 49503

www.accessKent.com



Kent County Mission Statement

The mission of Kent County government is to be an effective and efficient steward in delivering quality services for our diverse community. Our priority is to provide mandated services, which may be enhanced and supplemented by additional services to improve the quality of life for all our citizens within the constraints of sound fiscal policy.